

TRAFFIC SAFETY BOARD MEETING

December 14, 2009 – 1:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Chairman Joe Waldron, Mechanicville PD; E. M. Rooney, Sheriff's Office; Cynthia Dort, Cornell Univ. Ext. of Saratoga; Bob Murphy, STOP-DWI Coordinator; Mickey Mahoney, Probation Dept.; Tim Williams, Waterford PD; Thomas Parks, Charlton Police; James Davis, D.A.'s Office; Judy Ekman, Prevention Council; Steve Williams, Daily Gazette

Chairman Waldron called the meeting to order.

Mr. Murphy stated departments can have an additional eight hours from this date on through 12/31. We have submitted our budget to the State, and they have accepted it conditionally upon funds, he said. He said he finished a letter today, and as soon as they get it, they will send something back, and then he will give a copy to everybody. We are in good shape, and we still have a reserve, he stated. The reserve can only be used by us and no one else, he said.

Mr. Murphy mentioned that Mrs. Ekman will be retiring in June.

Chairman Waldron said with the new Leandra's Law, first time offenders of DWI or impaired by drugs may be charged with a Class E felony. He said on the 21st, they had four DWI's back to back. He stated the law basically says if you kill a child under intoxication, you can be charged with a Class E felony. An interlock ignition switch goes on the vehicles of those convicted, he said.

Mr. Murphy said this year, we put \$30,000 in the budget. There are a couple of agencies that do not get involved, and we could be doing a lot more with revenue if we could get these agencies in here, he said. We should entice these people some way in 2010, he added.

Chairman Waldron stated the seat belt enforcement is still taking place. The expanded wave is running through April, he said.

Mrs. Dort stated teen driver safety is picking up. We will be in Mechanicville High School the week before Spring break. They will be contacting the police department to see what part they will play, she said. We will also be back at Ballston Spa and So. Glens Falls High Schools, she said. She stated Mr. Davis and she will be working on the moving wall and teen driver safety. Mr. Davis said they are available for other schools. We can do power point presentations without using the wall, but that wall is a nice asset, he said.

Mr. Davis stated the NYSP have initiated a new breathalyzer, AlcoTest 9510, and they will be doing a press release tomorrow at SP Clifton Park. It has a different dry gas in a canister, and it is a new state-of-the-art breath tester instrument.

Mr. Davis pointed out the Legislature made the effective date for the mandatory ignition lock for August 15th. He said if Probation does not monitor this, who will? A lot of these people will be on conditional discharge and not on Probation, so will it be fair for them to be lumped in with Probation, he asked. Mr. Mahoney stated there are hundreds of people in each county on conditional discharge. Mr. Davis said there will be an additional fee levied on every DWI. Some of the money should be used to create a position for each county to monitor this ignition lock program, he stated. We know these people may operate other people's cars, but there are violations for that, he said. This Friday is when Leandra's Law goes into effect, and the ignition lock program goes into effect August 15th.

Mrs. Ekman stated this driving felony applies to any driver 16 years of age and older. She said the more passengers you have, the worst decision making there is. This has some really big implications for high school kids and their parents, she said. We will really be working with high school SADD chapters on this, she stated.

Mrs. Ekman said with regard to victim impact panels, we are hoping the whole ignition interlocking system will reduce our population considerably and cut back on the number of panels because it is a tremendous burden on the victims, and there are not many who are willing to speak.

Mrs. Ekman said they have a regional prevention co-op that goes from Schoharie County to Canada and to Fulton-Montgomery. She mentioned in Washington County, prescription drug abuse is getting worse and worse. We are looking to work on a prescription drug deposit program that is severely regulated by Narcotics and the EPA. Local police agencies can be a drop off for prescription drugs if we do the work to apply, she said. We have to look at what communities that do not have any law enforcement station. Will police agencies be willing to be a drop off, and we will try to work with pharmacies, she stated. We need more information from law enforcement about the availability in participating in something like this in the Spring, she said. The drugs are then taken somewhere to be incinerated, but I do not have all of the details yet, she said. Chairman Waldron asked if they thought about getting the local pharmacy in on this. Mrs. Ekman said yes. Warren County has done work with Hannaford, and Rite Aid, she said. She mentioned that prescription drug abuse is a precursor to heroin. She asked if heroin is seen in this County, and Chairman Waldron and Mr. Rooney said yes.

Mrs. Dort stated in the Community Awareness Committee that she chairs, they talked about trying to hold quarterly drop offs in a different location. We are finding kids are raiding their parents' medicine cabinets. The goal is more of an awareness to parents, and on our end, we want to bring this awareness to parents.

Mr. Rooney asked what the feedback is from the pharmacists. Mrs. Ekman said very positive. Mr. Rooney stated the Sheriff's Dept. would have to handle that as they do their evidence as opposed to a pharmacy handling this. Mrs. Ekman said we would like to work with all of the medical facilities. The adults would have to be the ones to drop off the prescription drugs, she said. We would have to promulgate a whole procedure, she added. She said their student surveys in high schools haven't shown a significant increase in heroin. We need a little more data from law enforcement about the number of arrests, hospitalizations, etc., to help people wake up to the fact this is a significant issue, she said. She stated they are better off working with pharmacies as a drop off point.

Mrs. Dort said in their committee, they talked about doing it at pharmacies, but she believes there has to be police presence at those drop offs. Chairman Waldron said he thinks that law enforcement would be a hurdle. Mrs. Ekman said this will be a late Spring initiative if this is done regionally. We will get all of the details. If there is a law enforcement role that has to be played, we will let you know, she said.

Mrs. Ekman said they are applying for a grant for enforcing the underage drinking laws. We have been fortunate in getting all of them so far, she said. Please send your letter of support promptly if you do get a call from us, she said.

Mrs. Ekman reported that the Saratoga County Youth Court is in jeopardy. We have had large grants out there, but neither of the came through, and the County is not doing outside funding. We are in trouble keeping that program open, she said. It is the place where kids from Probation or court actually have to do something to pay for the consequences of their first time arrest, she stated. She said they used to get about \$22,000 from municipalities, and the court costs them about \$90,000 to run. She said Joe Bruno used to give they a good grant every year, and the Prevention Council could manage to fund raise the extra. She said she has been talking to The Gazette about doing a story.

Mrs. Ekman stated the next Victim Impact Panel will be January 12th in Saratoga Springs.

Chairman Waldron wished everyone a Happy Holiday season and a strong 2010.

**** NEXT MEETING – MONDAY, JANUARY 25, 2010 AT 1:00 P.M. ****

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Elaine M. Sodemann